

Check List for Transformative Vocational Education and Training (VET) for Youth in Kisumu, Kenya



VET Training in Kisumu Today

The potential of VET centers in providing youth in Kenya with skills that can earn them a livelihood is well-known, and well expressed within the then Ministry of Education, HRD, Youth and Sports National TVETA Act (2013). The Vocational Education and Training bill (2020) mandated each county government in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, to establish and maintain such vocational education and training centers, including special vocational education and training centers and integrated vocational education and training centers for trainees with special needs. Kisumu County has been on the forefront to support VET with a total of 26 public and 13 private VET opportunities to support upskilling programs within the County. However, despite the number of VET facilities aimed at providing youth with technical skills that can help them earn a living, youth in rural areas such as Nyando and Muhoroni sub-counties of Kisumu still have low technical skills, with the majority of these youth turning to Boda Boda (delivery services) industry to earn a livelihood. Sustainable Rural Initiatives (SRI) conducted research to understand the reasons behind the low technical skills so as to better improve SRI's technical training programs.

Check List for Transformative Vocational Education and Training (VET) for Youth



Ensure qualified personnel in VET Centers

From our focus group discussion conducted in **Nyando and Muhoroni Sub-Counties**, 50% of the respondent youth confirmed that **most of the technical training centers within the areas of Nyando and Muhoroni Sub-Counties had limited qualified personnel**, resulting in very high teacher student ratios. In other centers, there were no trainers for courses listed in the centers such as computer training. Additionally, in areas where there is flooding like Muhoroni, teachers only come when there is no flooding thus students do not have trainers in the flooding season.



Secure equipment for meaningful training

There is **limited number of equipment** given the high student number enrolled in these centers, which results into **limited practical sessions** thus students do not get adequate practical training. Additionally, **the equipment used for the practical training are out of date** (e.g. manual car equipment verses automatic car equipment) thus their skills are redundant and still need further training to access job opportunities after they complete their courses.

"Most of us have been supported by the scholarship kitty under the office of the MP, to access technical courses at Ahero Multi-purpose. The challenge is, in one class, we were more than 70 learners being taught by a single tutor with a lab able to only accommodate less than half of us."



Meet the training needs of the community

Traditional courses offered don't match the opportunities in the community. The youth would like courses e.g., in electrical engineering as there are tenders for these kinds of skills, but the VETs in the community do not offer such courses. There are also opportunities in plant operation, but such driving courses are not offered.

"I opted for a technical college around my home to train in mechanics but my disappointment came when I started practicing using car engines that have already been outdated in the modern market. This made me take more time in the garages in order to be fully qualified."



Connect training and education to earning

Having a VET **certification and skills is not seen by youth as a catalyst to better economic opportunities.**

Addressing this gap is important to attract youth to training centers and increase their knowledge and skills.

"I have seen so many youth train in Ahero Vocational Center but most of them are just wandering in the village, with no better future"



Create mechanisms to reduce financial barriers

With most beneficiaries of this VET ailing from humble backgrounds, the fees **levied on technical courses are unaffordable for some youth** who therefore are unable to access the courses. Kitties from MPs& MCAs have supported youth who would otherwise have not had access to enroll for VET courses, but at the cost of compromised learning quality given the high pressure on limited center facilities.

Meet Youth where they are

There is **limited awareness of VET centers offerings**. While media methods such as radio are employed to communicate regarding the VET courses, **50% of the participants** would not clearly state what courses are offered within the existing VETs in the sub-county.

Include youth in VET decision making

Youth are not part of VET decision making locally. 70% of youth respondents reported being underrepresented in decision making concerning their involvement in the VET centers. Authorities and VET program administrators should consult the youth to ensure trainings are responsive to the needs of the youth in the community.

Consider gender barriers in accessing VET

60% of female respondents have linked their low enrolment in technical courses to **negative community perceptions on girls taking technical courses**. The stigma on women working in the technical skills sector should be considered for VET, as well as for communications around VET programs.

Address negative perceptions about VET training

There is a **negative perception** on blue-collar jobs. **Peer pressure** has played a key role in discouraging youth engaging in VET skills programs, especially in carpentry and tailoring, by their peers who went for white collar job courses.

Methodology: this product is the result of a mixed methods research, conducted by Sustainable Rural Initiatives Kenya, that involved 220 participants from Kisumu Kenya. Respondents comprised of youth in technical fields of learning, youth with technical skills, youth out of schools and decision makers/policy makers. The data was collected through the following mechanisms:

- 120 Surveys
- 60 participants in Focus Groups
- 40 key informant interviews

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